

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, March 7, 1997.

Hon. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN,
Chairman, Committee on International Relations,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 750, the Hong Kong Reversion Act, as ordered reported by the House Committee on International Relations on March 6, 1997.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Joseph C. Whitehill.

Sincerely,

JUNE E. O'NEILL,
Director.

Enclosure.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST
ESTIMATE

H.R. 750, HONG KONG REVERSION ACT—AS ORDERED REPORTED BY THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ON MARCH 6, 1997

CBO estimates that the bill would result in no significant costs to the federal government. Because it would not affect direct spending or receipts, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply. H.R. 750 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-4) and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

The United States-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-383) allows the laws of the United States to be applied to Hong Kong without change after its reversion to China so long as Hong Kong remains sufficiently autonomous to justify a separate treatment. H.R. 750 would require that the Secretary of State's report on conditions in Hong Kong required by the earlier act address specific issues regarding Hong Kong's cooperation with U.S. agencies and continued autonomy.

In addition, H.R. 750 would continue, after Hong Kong reverts to China, some of the privileges and immunities that employees of the Hong Kong economic and trade offices currently enjoy as part of the British consular presence.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Joseph C. Whitehill. The estimate was approved by Robert A. Sunshine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 570, the Hong Kong Reversion Act. I commend Chairman BEREUTER and Ranking Member BERMAN for bringing this bill to the floor today. While there are differing views in Congress about the direction which United States-China policy should take, we are all united in our concern about the future of Hong Kong. On July 1, 1997, less than 4 months from now, control over Hong Kong will revert to China. This action defines the future for a freedom-loving people, who will find themselves under the jurisdiction of an authoritarian regime.

There is much at stake with this takeover and the people of Hong Kong are not the only ones who will feel its effects. Hong Kong's very viability as a global financial center will be threatened if the Chinese Government does not act responsibly and does not respect internationally recognized basic human rights and fundamental principles. Transparency, access to unbiased information in real time, and recourse to an independent judicial system are all critical components of long-term economic growth. Restrictions on freedom of the press

and freedom of speech stifle a citizenry and undermine its economy. Unfortunately, the future picture for Hong Kong is already clouded.

In 1984, the United Kingdom and China in 1984 created a framework for Hong Kong's reversion in the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The Joint Declaration established a "one-country, two-system" arrangement, under which Hong Kong would enjoy a "high degree of autonomy" in its operation for the next 50 years. Recently, serious questions have arisen about China's intentions to adhere to its agreement in light of actions by Beijing, including abolishing Hong Kong's democratically elected legislature, and repealing its Bill of Rights and other ordinances ensuring the rights of freedom of association and assembly.

H.R. 750 reaffirms congressional support for the autonomy of Hong Kong and implements a series of reports and guidelines to determine whether China is fulfilling its obligations under the 1984 Joint Declaration. Under the bill, the President of the United States could modify current United States law and policies involving Hong Kong, should he determine that "Hong Kong is not sufficiently autonomous * * *". While this bill does not go as far as I believe it should go in protecting the people of Hong Kong, it is an important step.

No discussion of Hong Kong's future would be complete without acknowledging the ongoing struggle of its brave prodemocracy movement to ensure basic freedoms for its people. The courage and commitment of Hong Kong's prodemocracy activists, led by Martin Lee, and including Emily Lau and Christine Loh, is exemplary. We must speak out on their behalf to support their efforts and to ensure their safety.

Mr. HILLIARD. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Nebraska [Mr. BEREUTER] that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 750, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 5 of rule I and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BEREUTER. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the measure just considered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Nebraska?

There was no objection.

MAKING CERTAIN TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 1965 RELATING TO GRADUATION DATA DISCLOSURES

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill

(H.R. 914) to make certain technical corrections in the Higher Education Act of 1965 relating to graduation data disclosures, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 914

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. TECHNICAL AMENDMENTS RELATING TO DISCLOSURES REQUIRED WITH RESPECT TO GRADUATION RATES.

(a) AMENDMENTS.—Section 485 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1092) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(3)(B), by striking "June 30" and inserting "August 31"; and

(2) in subsection (e)(9), by striking "August 30" and inserting "August 31".

(b) EFFECTIVE DATES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the amendments made by subsection (a) are effective upon enactment.

(2) INFORMATION DISSEMINATION.—No institution shall be required to comply with the amendment made by subsection (a)(1) before July 1, 1998.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California [Mr. McKEON] and the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. KILDEE] each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California [Mr. McKEON]

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, today we are taking up H.R. 914, which the gentleman from Michigan [Mr. KILDEE] and I introduced, and which was reported by the Committee on Education and the Workforce by voice vote.

H.R. 914 makes a technical correction to the student right-to-know provisions of the Higher Education Act. The student right-to-know provisions of the Higher Education Act require institutions of higher education to report graduation rates for their student body.

These statistics are compiled for the student body at large and for student athletes as well. Unfortunately, a change made in the fiscal year 1996 omnibus appropriations bill resulted in these rates being calculated at different points in time during the academic year. Rates for the student body at large are calculated as of June 30, while rates for student athletes are calculated as of August 30.

As a result of this mistake, institutions will be required to keep two sets of records for calculating and reporting graduation rates. This amendment corrects the problem by conforming the section of the Higher Education Act dealing with the reporting date for student athletes to the section of the Higher Education Act that requires preparation of graduation rates for all students.

This amendment will set August 31 as the uniform reporting date, which allows institutions to more accurately reflect the manner in which they collect the data on graduation rates, and eliminates the burdensome task of preparing two distinct sets of graduation rates.